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SUBJECT: UNRWA LAUNCHES NEW USD 93.7 MILLION EMERGENCY
APPEAL; TOUCHES ON CONTINGENCY PLANNING AND TERMS UNRWA
STAFF FATALITY RATE "COMPLETELY AND TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE"

Classified By: A/DCM Tom Young per 1.5 (b) and (d).

1. (C) Summary and comment: At December 10 and 11 briefings in Jerusalem and Amman, UNRWA ComGen Hansen launched UNRWA's new USD 93.7 million appeal to cover six months of emergency programming in the West Bank and Gaza. The majority of the appeal would cover expanded food assistance programs (USD 32.5 million) and temporary jobs programs (USD 29.3 million). Excluding UNRWA's one-time costs of USD 27 million to rebuild portions of Jenin refugee camp, this new six-month appeal represents a 30 percent increase over 2002 emergency programming. UNRWA's combined 2002 appeals remain funded at only fifty-four percent, with USD 93.6 million pledged to date. UNRWA still has nearly USD 60 million of 2002 emergency cash on-hand, funds Hansen said have been obligated for programming that will continue into 2003. Hansen urged donors to contribute early to the new appeal, to allow UNRWA to stockpile food and supplies to respond to any new crises in the region. Hansen also told donors that UNRWA's staff fatality rate -- six killed in 2002 -- represents the "deadliest year in relative terms for any UN humanitarian agency." To compensate for these risks, UNRWA has increased its emergency program support costs to the standard UN rate of 12 percent to provide hazard pay for its West Bank and Gaza staff. Hansen also told donors that while the IDF had completed its own investigation into Iain Hook's death, it had not shared the report with UNRWA. Finally, Hansen touched only briefly on the UN-wide consolidated appeals for the West Bank and Gaza and did not address the UN's proposed new coordination mechanisms, to be implemented by OCHA. Given the importance of enhanced humanitarian coordination mechanisms, we urge the Department to make a significant and early contribution to OCHA's 2003 appeal. End summary and comment.

2. (SBU) At December 10 and 11 donor briefings in Jerusalem and Amman, UNRWA Commissioner General Peter Hansen launched UNRWA's new six-month appeal for emergency programs in the West Bank and Gaza, totaling USD 93.7 million. Regional refcoord attended the Amman launch. Hansen told donors that the new six-month appeal represents only an 8.5 percent increase in programming on an annual basis (combined UNRWA emergency appeals for 2002 total USD 172 million), but UNRWA's calculations are based on the inclusion of presumably one-time USD 27 million in costs to rebuild significant portions of Jenin refugee camp. Absent the Jenin-related costs, the new 2003 appeal represents an increase in funding requirements of nearly 30 percent. UNRWA's combined 2002 appeals currently are funded only at fifty-four percent, with USD 93.6 million pledged to date. (Comment: Given an overall decline in donor support for UNRWA in 2002, it is unlikely that this first six-month appeal for 2003 will be fully funded.)

Food Aid and Jobs Programs Majority of New Appeal

3. (SBU) Hansen told donors most of the increase in emergency funding requirements was due to increased food assistance needs in the West Bank and Gaza. Following the USAID-funded study of malnutrition in the West Bank and Gaza, UNRWA determined that it needed to increase its food assistance programs and include protein and iron-fortified flour in its food packages. Food assistance needs (projected at USD 32.5 million) account for slightly more than 30 percent of the appeal. UNRWA plans to distribute food to 90,000 families in the West Bank and 132,000 families in Gaza.

4. (SBU) Funding for temporary employment programs (USD 29.3 million) constitute slightly less than 30 percent of UNRWA's emergency programming. Hansen told donors UNRWA would prefer to provide more job creation programs and less food aid, but that continuing closures and curfews -- particularly in the West Bank -- hindered UNRWA's ability to undertake such projects. In Jenin refugee camp, for example, UNRWA employees were unable to work on 27 of 30 days in a recent month. (Comment: Temporary employment programs in the Gaza field include a request for USD 684,000 to fund short-term employment in "institutions outside UNRWA, including municipalities, community rehabilitation centers supported by UNRWA and other local institutions providing relief and

social aid to the community." Expansion of temporary employment programs to non-UNRWA institutions would make it difficult to ensure that UNRWA and the USG have complied fully with section 301(c) of the Foreign Assistance Act. We recommend that any US contributions to the new appeal specifically prohibit any USG funds from supporting this program.)

Significant Cash on-Hand; Obligated for Existing Programs

15. (SBU) Given that UNRWA is projected to have nearly USD 60 million in emergency appeal cash on-hand as of December 31, refcoord asked Hansen to explain UNRWA's planned programming for the existing contributions. Hansen said that slightly more than USD 40 million of this cash balance has been obligated for emergency programming that will continue into the first quarter (or, in some cases, even first half) of 2003. Such programming includes longer term projects, such as direct employment programs, infrastructure improvements, school construction projects and even food aid programs. Hansen told donors that several large construction projects in both the West Bank and Gaza have been delayed due to curfews and closures. Yet UNRWA nevertheless has contractual obligations to pay for services that have not yet been delivered. Hansen said that UNRWA therefore cannot obligate the funds for other programs. UNRWA's West Bank and Gaza Directors added that unobligated funds raised under the 2002 emergency program are limited to USD 12.5 million in the West Bank and 6.8 million in Gaza.

Early Contributions Urged to Allow UNRWA to Stockpile Goods

15. (C) Noting the possibility of new conflict in the region, Hansen urged donors to make early contributions to UNRWA's new emergency appeal. Although UN-wide contingency planning is still under discussion, individual UN agencies have not yet been given authorization to approach donors on their projected needs. Early contributions to UNRWA's new 2003 appeal, Hansen said, would allow the agency to stockpile food and supplies to respond to further violence in the West Bank and Gaza, an influx of Palestinians from the West Bank into Jordan, or perhaps even a movement of the estimated 100,000 Palestinians believed to be resident in Iraq. Hansen confirmed that if Palestinians fleeing Iraq could prove their eligibility for UNRWA services, the agency would provide services to them. (NOTE: UNRWA officials previously told refcoord that it would need USD 30 million to stockpile food and non-food items in the region.)

UNRWA Staff Fatalities "Completely and Totally Unacceptable"

16. (C) Hansen told donors that UNRWA's staff fatality rate -- six employees killed in 2002, including two killed in the line of duty -- is of "particular concern" to the agency. He said that 2002 had constituted the "deadliest year in relative terms for any UN humanitarian agency." As an example of the dangers faced on a daily basis by UN staff, Hansen told donors about the December 9 attack on a clearly marked UNRWA school bus in Gaza. After waiting at a checkpoint for "several hours," the IDF soldiers on the ground gave the bus permission to move. Yet as soon as the bus started, Hansen said, it was shot from behind, with one bullet moderately wounding an UNRWA student. Such incidents, Hansen told donors, are "completely and totally unacceptable, yet they take place with frequency and impunity." He added that UNRWA is waiting to see what judgment, if any, is rendered against the IDF soldier who shot UNRWA employee Iain Hook on October 28.

17. (SBU) Although UNRWA employees are required to work in "the most dangerous situation," Hansen said that they are the only UN employees not receiving hazard pay in the West Bank and Gaza. To provide hazard pay for the days on which West Bank and Gaza staff actually are able to make it to work, UNRWA has increased its program support costs (PSC) associated with emergency programs from the previous rate of five percent to the standard, UN-wide rate of 12 percent (the same rate applied to UNRWA general fund programs and special projects).

Further on UN and IDF Investigations of Hook's Death

18. (C) In response to a question from refcoord, Hansen told donors that UNSECOORD's report on its investigation into the November 22 death of UNRWA employee Iain Hook was finalized on December 9. He was not sure whether the report would be publicly available, but said the circumstances of Hook's death were clear: an IDF sniper shot an unarmed UN employee in a clearly marked UN compound. Hansen said there was "no way" an IDF sniper shooting from 25 meters could have mistaken a mobile phone for a weapon. Hansen also noted that although the IDF report on its own internal investigation

into the shooting had been finalized and shared with certain diplomatic missions, the Israeli Government had not shared its report with UNRWA.

Comment -- Need for Enhanced Humanitarian Coordination

19. (C) Comment: While Hansen briefly mentioned that UNRWA's new six-month appeal was included in the new UN-wide consolidated appeal for the West Bank and Gaza launched in Bern on November 19, he addressed neither UNRWA's role vis-a-vis overall UN programming nor the need for enhanced humanitarian coordination in the West Bank and Gaza. We hear from senior UNRWA officials that Hansen continues to resist the coordination recommendations included in both the Bertini report and the November report of the UN interagency technical assessment mission; his neglect of this important issue during the launch seems to further confirm his reluctance to cooperate with other UN agencies. Given the difficulties of implementing new coordination mechanisms, it is essential that OCHA's presence in the West Bank and Gaza be augmented as quickly as possible. A significant and early PRM contribution to OCHA's 2003 appeal would signal the importance we attach to enhanced cooperation and OCHA's critical role in the current crisis.

110. (U) ConGen Jerusalem cleared this message.
GNEHM